



FOREIGN POLICY bulletin

AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 23

The New Temper of Burmese Politics

by Frank N. Trager

On June 5, 1958 *The New York Times* carried a Reuters dispatch from Rangoon, Burma, announcing the formation of a new cabinet by its prime minister, U Nu. Fifteen ministers out of a cabinet of thirty had just resigned. Among them were several leaders who together with U Nu had helped to organize in the mid-1930's the successful struggle for Burmese independence. By agreement between the two factions of the ruling party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, an emergency session of the bicameral Burmese Parliament was convened to test their political strength—each side having committed itself publicly before a group of venerable Buddhist *pongyis* (monks) to abide peacefully by the democratic outcome.

On June 10 *The New York Times* carried a brief United Press dispatch indicating that U Nu had won a vote of confidence by 127 to 119—a close shave. His majority required the support of several parliamentary Opposition groups, including the crypto-Communists—the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party (BWPP). Several later by-line stories (June 21, 22, 24, 25 and 27) reported that fears of civil war had been expressed as a result of the

split; that in the now prorogued Parliament the minority, who control a majority of the supreme councillors or delegates to the ruling body of what had been the dominant party, had expelled Prime Minister U Nu from office and membership in the party; and that the prime minister had again appealed to the insurgents to surrender their arms, "to come out into the light," and to take their political chances in the forthcoming elections. He offered to legalize the Communist party, which had been outlawed since it went into insurrection in March 1948.

The inquiring reader may well have been puzzled by these events. Had he relied on the American press or radio he would not have received any warning, for virtually nothing had appeared in the previous months to alert him. And he would have been hard pressed to understand the situation in Burma from the half-dozen stories which appeared in our press during June.

Here is a background account of the split in the majority party, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, and an assessment of its possible consequences.

1. Before the turn of this century Burmese

AUGUST 15, 1958

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED
345 EAST 46TH STREET • NEW YORK 17, NEW YORK

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nationalism, directed against the then ruling power, Britain, had its roots in Buddhist organizations. During and following World War I its leaders argued for measures of "home rule" which would move them along the path of increasing control over their own affairs. Their campaigns closely paralleled the Indian Congress movement, although the Burmese used more conventional political techniques than Mahatma Gandhi. By 1937 a constitution providing significant advances in self-rule had gone into operation, and for the first time since the first Anglo-Burmese War, 1824-1826, all of Burma was separated from British rule in India. By this time a younger, more radically nationalist group had begun to emerge, influenced in no small measure by Marxist slogans and ideas concerning the nature of imperialism or colonialism, capitalism and independence. They were known by various names, but usually styled themselves by the Burmese word, *thakin*, i.e. those who resolve to be "masters" in their own house.

The 'Masters'

2. By 1939, on the eve of World War II, this group, relatively young, (most of them having been born between 1907 and 1915), included Thakins Aung San, Mya, Nu, Kyaw Nyein, Ba Swe, Than Tun, Thein Pe and others. They adopted an anti-British policy because they felt that London would not advance Burma toward freedom and that Japan's Asian promises held out greater hope for their avowed goal. With minor

exceptions they welcomed the victorious Japanese in 1942.

3. Japanese promises, despite the creation of a freed puppet Burma in 1943, were soon seen to be deceptive. A resistance movement was then organized by the thakins.

Winning of Freedom

4. The resistance movement, which included Socialists, Communists, nationalists, peasant and labor groups, youth and women's organizations, was formally launched in August 1944. The thakins called it the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, (AFPFL), and it was led by the men listed above. Gradually the AFPFL carried its cause to victory, first against the Japanese by aiding the returning Western allies; next against the reimposition of British colonial power after 1945. By successful political and economic tactics executed under the command of the AFPFL leadership, Burma won its independence from Britain through peaceful negotiations begun by General Aung San in January 1947 and concluded by Thakin Nu in the same year.

Independence was celebrated on January 4, 1948. Before this, three events have taken place which deeply affected the subsequent decade. General Aung San, Thakin Mya and several other leaders were assassinated in July 1947 by a right-wing Opposition group. The Communists had been first excluded from the leadership of the AFPFL, Kyaw Nyein replacing Than Tun as secretary, and then voted out of the league itself. The Cominform was organized in

the fall of 1947 and, inaugurating a "left" or violent revolutionary strategy, proceeded to move into South and Southeast Asia.

5. Thakin Nu (after the first national elections in 1951 he dropped the prefix "thakin" and has since been known as U Nu, "U" meaning "master" or respect for an older person) became independent Burma's first prime minister, heading, as president, the coalition party, the AFPFL. Except for one short period in 1956-57 he has held this top ministerial post. There was never any question that the leadership within the AFPFL, unlike the exclusive role of Prime Minister Nehru in India's Congress party, was shared among a quadrumvirate—Nu, Ba Swe, Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Tin. Each of these men had certain close party allies and organizations on which they relied for support—trade unions, peasant organizations, cooperatives, up-country "hill" peoples, and so on.

Communist Revolt

6. The ruling group within the AFPFL suffered from and nearly succumbed to the Communist rebellion which followed the Cominform meetings in late 1947 and early 1948. It began, on signal, in March, 1948 (as it did in Malaya and Indonesia, also in 1948). The Communist rebellion was matched by a second major revolt led by members of a dissident ethnic group, the Karens, who wished to have their own state outside the Union of Burma and preferably in some relation to the British Commonwealth. The term "multicol-

Published twice a month by the FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, INC., 345 East 46th Street, New York 17, N.Y., U.S.A. EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: JOHN S. BADEAU • ROBERT R. BOWIE • BENJAMIN J. BUTTENWIESER • EDWIN F. CHINLUND • HENRY STEELE COMMAGER • BROOKS EMENY • AUGUST HECKSCHER • HAROLD F. LINDER • MARGARET PARTON • STEPHEN H. STACKPOLE. • *President*, JOHN W. NASON • *Editor*, VERA MICHELES DEAN • *Washington Contributor*, NEAL STANFORD • *Assistant Editor*, GWEN CROWE. • *The Foreign Policy Association contributes to the public understanding by presenting a cross-section of views on world affairs. The Association as an organization takes no position on international issues. Any opinions expressed in its publications are those of the authors.* • Subscription Rates: \$4.00 a year; single copies 20 cents. RE-ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER SEPTEMBER 26, 1951 AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N.Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879. Please allow one month for change of address. Contents of this BULLETIN may be reproduced with credit to the Foreign Policy Association.

347

Produced under union conditions and composed, printed and bound by union labor.

ored insurgents" of Burma—a term unfortunately given currency by the Burmese themselves—was always a misnomer. Essentially rebellion in Burma has been led by Communists and separatist Karens.

7. The AFPFL experienced an ideological split in December 1950 when a group of crypto-Communists who had not gone underground, desiring to support the Sino-Soviet foreign policy line, left the AFPFL. They have since been known as the Burma Workers' and Peasants' party (BWPP), and now form the core of the left united Opposition in Parliament, which is modeled on that of Britain. The united Opposition, made up of several groups, is known as the National Unity Front (NUF). It controls approximately 45-46 votes in the 250-man "lower" but more powerful house.

Marxism Rejected

8. The AFPFL government survived the rebellions and the 1950 split. It won resounding victories in two national elections, 1951 and 1956. It had no difficulty in marshaling overwhelming parliamentary support for its plans and policies. This it did while engaging in execution of a program designed to make Burma a welfare state, based on an announced ideology of democratic socialism. On January 29, 1958, at the Third All-Burma Congress of the AFPFL, U Nu delivered the major speech on this theme by prior agreement with all members of his cabinet, some of whom, like Ba Swe, Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Tin, were also leaders in the Burma Socialist party, which is organized outside of, but completely supports, the AFPFL. In this speech, virtually ignored in the United States, U Nu explicitly rejected Marxism, which he defined as communism, and eloquently reiterated the cabinet's and the AFPFL's en-

dorsement of democracy and socialism. He found Marxist communism incompatible with Buddhism, the dominant faith of Burma.

9. This congress revealed some of the fissures in the AFPFL which, despite ideological agreement, had severely disturbed the party for a number of years.

Personalities, organizational control of the party apparatus and corruption were the immediate issues which divided the AFPFL. For the next five weeks Burma was then treated to a vitriolic, mud-slinging campaign, typical of United States ward politics at the very lowest. Each side accused the other of corruption and of seeking undemocratic control of the party and its apparatus. Suspicion and ill-humor exploded. Fears that one side or the other would use armed force were rife, but both sides, as indicated, promised otherwise.

10. To the pride of the vocal public and the press the regular army refused to be embroiled. On June 23 General Ne Win, head of the Burmese armed forces, in a brief, vigorously publicized speech to the Commanding Officers' Conference made clear that the army was not in politics and would remain loyal to any legally elected government.

What Kind of Socialism?

11. U Nu, who as prime minister frequently served as his own national planning minister, has often proclaimed that he is for democratic socialism. But Kyaw Nyein, whether as minister in charge of the economy or as chief Socialist planner, is the "theoretician" of the Socialists in the AFPFL. In this respect he has had a harder line against domestic and international communism than almost any other AFPFL leader. He is the "number one" target of the underground Communists and their above-ground friends, the BWPP. U Nu

has fought the Communists in rebellion, but he is perhaps more prepared to make Buddhist concessions to them if they "come out into the light."

These differences, however, are not doctrinal or ideological—they are part of the personality structure and adaptation of a convinced Buddhist on the one hand and a probable but discreet secularist on the other.

Kyaw Nyein would probably have continued to live politically with his place in the hierarchy—U Nu, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein had been the usual order of political precedence—because he regards himself more as a strategist and operator than as a public figure. He revolted, however, when he became convinced that the apparatus of the party on which he had labored and which he needs was gradually being turned over to a man—Kyaw Tun—whom he scorns intellectually and otherwise.

Future of Democracy

12. What does the split mean? One frequent writer on the Burmese scene, the Australian, Geoffrey Fairbairn ("The Burmese Political Crisis," *Australia's Neighbors*, Melbourne, May 1958), calls it "this determined attempt at suicide on the part of Burmese democracy." I have the advantage of writing several weeks later. But I would not then or now have agreed with him.

Nu hopes to call a new "national convention" which would consider the adoption of a three-point "national charter" devoted to support of democracy and the constitution, fair elections and a definition of principles to be observed by the Opposition. However, he has hedged these promises and concessions with the demand that the Burma Communist party and related groups not only lay down their arms but resolve publicly

(Continued on page 182)



American Views On Lebanon

by Max Lerner

Dr. Lerner, author, newspaperman and teacher is currently professor of American civilization at Brandeis University and a daily columnist for the *New York Post*. This column of June 29 is reprinted by permission of the *New York Post*, copyright 1958 New York Post Corporation.

LIKE the de Gaulle crisis in France some weeks ago, which split liberal opinion sharply all over the world, the crisis in Lebanon has again challenged liberals to examine the dryness of their powder. On an issue like Little Rock or the execution of Imre Nagy the chances of divergent opinions among liberals are slight. But on an issue like the Nasser-triggered civil war in Lebanon, people who share the same basic values may come out with different positions.

That is why, in this last of three columns on Lebanon, I want to examine some of the assumptions underlying our thinking. If you believe that this is an ordinary civil war, and that the Nasserite hand in it is only marginal, then the answer is for America to stay clear of it and not get entangled—in another bemired, bedraggled, hopeless Korea. Similarly, if you believe that a new Lebanese government established after a rebel success would be independent of Egypt, as also of Russia and America—a “neutralist” government—then again the answer would be the same.

But I cannot accept either of these assumptions. It is the assumptions themselves that I challenge.

Nasser's Thrust for Empire

In the first place the Lebanese civil war is meaningless unless you see it within the frame of Nasser's thrust toward empire. Nasserism has become a new force to be reckoned with in the world, and one which—by its own definition—cannot be contained within the boundaries of any

country. In Cairo I read enough of Nasser's press to see the deliberate propaganda build-up against Chamoun and his pro-Western government. It was clear that in some way Nasser would try to overturn the Chamoun government and take over Lebanon for Nasserism—although the method was not clear at the time.

In Beirut I saw and heard enough to know that when the Lebanese showdown came, it would not be just between the pro-Chamoun and anti-Chamoun forces, but between Nasserism on one side and on the other one of the few forces left in the Middle East that has steadfastly withstood it.

Indirect Aggression

Given this framework one can dispose rather quickly of Nasser's straight-faced assertion of noninvolvement in the civil war. And one can also see the struggle for what it is—not a rebellion, but an act of invasion and aggression by infiltration of men and weapons long before the fighting itself started.

Then there is the curious liberal assumption that because Dulles and American policy have blundered, and because the present fracas in Lebanon has been made possible by those blunders, therefore we must have nothing to do with it. By the same reasoning we should have stayed clear of any involvement in the resistance of Spain and Czechoslovakia to the Fascist forces in the 1930's. If history is a nightmare it is largely because we are so often compelled to wrestle with monstrous problems

that would never have become monstrous except for the blunders of our leaders.

Most crucial of all is the assumption that every force in the Middle East which opposes Nasserism is an outworn expression of the *status quo*, and that we must not be caught supporting it. This, incidentally, is exactly the reasoning of Nasser and his propagandists, and it seems curious for any of us to adopt it.

Not a Status-Quo Country

We must not make the mistake of lumping Lebanon with the *status quo* regime of the house of Saud nor with the desperate police state in Jordan. I found that I could breathe freely in Beirut, in a way I could not have done in Amman or in Riyadh or, for that matter, in Damascus. Lebanon came into being as a state because it was the haven of refuge for every persecuted group of the Middle East—from the Maronite Roman Catholics, the Shiite Muslims, the Sunni Muslims, the Druses, the Greek Orthodox, the Armenians, the Jews. It is a state which, in its constitution, holds these groups in balance.

It is so little a police state, and so much a parliamentary republic, that the imperial ambition of Nasser found it enticingly vulnerable.

Any state, as I argued yesterday, has the right not to have its independence destroyed. But in this case we have one of the few Arab states that tries for an atmosphere of freedom, and the only one that is based on ethnic pluralism.

(Continued on page 182)

by **Walter Lippmann**

Mr. Lippmann has been a commentator on national and international affairs since 1914. His column, "Today and Tomorrow," has been published in and syndicated by the New York *Herald Tribune* since 1931. This article, copyrighted on July 17, 1958, is reprinted by permission of the author and the New York Herald Tribune, Inc.

THE Marines have been landed at Beirut in the desperate hope of limiting the disaster which the Iraqi revolution has brought upon the Western position. It would be a miracle, which is not likely to happen, if the landing, which is now confined to Beirut and its airport, is anywhere nearly sufficient to stabilize the situation. The Marines are quite able to protect the capital of the Lebanon just by their presence. But there is no assurance that they will bring the civil war to an end.

Moreover, Jordan, which is an artificial and fragile kingdom beset by a revolution similar to that in Iraq, is almost certain to appeal to Britain and America for military assistance. The President will find it as hard to refuse the appeal of King Hussein as the appeal of President Chamoun, though in the case of Jordan it may be British paratroopers who will be sent in.

Possibly, Saudi Arabia will be able to get along without calling for help, largely to be sure by a policy of neutrality which is increasingly benevolent to Nasser.

Finally, it seems most probable that the British will feel that they have to land troops in the little sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, where are their main oil holdings in the Middle East.

Grim Prospect

Thus, there is a grim prospect that the British and the Americans will find themselves holding on to beachheads on the fringes of the Arab countries of the Middle East. In no

Arab country, except the Lebanon, which is about half Christian, does the West have any strong friends. As the cards now lie, the best that President Eisenhower can hope for is that the bigger Arab nations can be contained by a holding operation at the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and of the Persian Gulf.

It will be a momentous question how deeply and for how long American forces are to be tied down in this holding operation. For Nasser will now control, except for Israel, all that we do not hold on to by military force.

Choice Between Evils

The decision to send in the Marines was, as we all realize, a tragic choice between two evils. After the Iraqi revolution, it was a virtual certainty that the Lebanon, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf states would fall too, if they were not supported from the outside. That was the evil the President decided to resist. The other evil, which he had, therefore, to embrace, was that we are now in military opposition to the Arab revolution, and that in the Middle East the alignment is increasingly sharp and spectacular between the Muslim Arabs and the Western powers with their client states.

The President's speech on Tuesday evening took the unfortunate line of identifying Nasser both with Hitler and with Stalin, and in declaring what amounts to an ideological war against him.

My own view is that the agonizing dilemma in which the President

found himself on Monday morning is due to a fundamental error, which many have pointed out, in the conception and design of our Middle Eastern policy. The error is in believing that the way to stabilize the Middle East is to align as many Middle Eastern countries as can be persuaded to join, in a military alliance against the Soviet Union.

This is an error for two main reasons. One is that it is absurd to suppose that a great power like Russia can be excluded from a region which is as close to her and as important to her as is Central America to the United States. The other reason is that the intent of the Arabs is not to be aligned with us or with the Soviet Union, but to be neutral and to profit by dealing with both sides.

The policies, based on this misconception, have blown up and are in ruin. They were based on theories which are contrary to the facts of life, and they were certain to fail.

New Policy Needed

This is not mere post-mortem. For it is most probable, it seems to me, that we shall not be able to reach any solution as long as the principle, or rather the ghost, of the old policy continues to dominate the thinking of the White House and of the State Department. That is to say, a policy of the military containment of Nasser, which is what we are now involved in, has no promise of any kind of settlement and is a great threat of far reaching complications.

The alternative is to propose a settlement in the Middle East based on the principle of neutrality. This is what Egypt professes and probably wants. And for the little states, like Lebanon and Israel, the principle of neutralization guaranteed by all the great powers and by the United Nations offers the greatest promise.

The essential point is that we

should not merely dig in on the beaches and then accept as the best that is possible an indefinitely prolonged indirect and ideological war with the Arab revolution. We should seek a settlement by negotiation, recognizing that both the Soviet Union and the United Arab Republic are powers and have interests with which we must reach an accommodation.

Lerner

(Continued from page 180)

Note that I do not base my position to any degree on the fact that Chamoun embraced the Eisenhower doctrine and now wants Eisenhower to fulfill his commitment. I wrote at the time the doctrine was declared that its weakest phase was its silly talk of resisting Communist aggression, and its failure to see that the anti-Nasser governments in the Middle East would always seem to be overthrown from within. Nor do I feel that military force is in any sense the answer to the problems of the Middle East.

Guns Against Guns

But where the enemy attacks with men and guns you cannot answer him by pious principles, and by shrugging your shoulders and saying that you are not your brother's keeper when your brother happens to be far off in Lebanon where military operations are difficult. Freedom will never survive in the world if those who seek to destroy it always have the monopoly of arms and men.

That is why I have argued for a UN police force to seal the Lebanese border, a force made up of troops from the smaller nations that are not involved in either camp, and of American troops as well.

Let us remember that Nasserism is only in one sense a revolutionary force. It is also a deeply reactionary one, which uses the slogans of nationalism while eating nations, and

the slogans of independence without any commitment to freedom.

If this force wins in Lebanon, the chain reaction will reach very far through the Middle East. It would serve notice on all nations from Iran to the tip of Saudi Arabia that resistance is hopeless and that reliance either on the UN or the United States is futile.

Trager

(Continued from page 179)

to support the principles of such a democratic charter and sever themselves from any remaining underground force. He has reluctantly agreed not to oppose the formation of two new states—Arakan, which is geographically possible, and a Mon state which would be completely unviable. (Burma is a federal republic consisting of Burma proper and five other states or divisions; Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Karen. These tend to be geographically and ethnically distinctive areas.)

13. The Burmese armed forces on June 29 gave return "safe conduct" to a Major Hla Myaing who had been in Rangoon "negotiating" for Than Tun, the underground Communist leader. They rejected the Communist bid for legalization and for retention of armed Communists as units within the army. On January 29 the NUF for the first time publicly appealed to the underground to end the civil war and to join it in the forthcoming election campaign. It is doubtful whether the regular late August-early September budget session of Parliament will be held. Such a session would pose too many problems for U Nu with so slender a majority.

'No Suicide'

14. The Ba Swe-Kyaw Nyein group has reorganized the AFPFL with Ba Swe as president. They have not only won a majority of the 260

councillors of the AFPFL; they have also taken with them about 20-22 "parliamentary secretaries," the political leadership just below the cabinet level. In terms of political leadership resources they are stronger than U Nu's group—which has retained the AFPFL label—calling themselves the "clean" AFPFL, and have already begun to campaign in the countryside against U Nu's great personal popularity.

Thus, without saying that the split is good or healthy for Burma, it is probable that there will be no "suicide"; and it is not altogether impossible that what will emerge in Burma is a three-party system: Liberal *cum* Socialist, Socialist, and Communist. Formerly, Burma was in effect a "single-party" democracy comparable to India and its Congress party. There is much to be said for these "single-party" arrangements during the formative years of independence. However, single parties succumb both to the corroding acids of time—that is, leaders who held pre- and post-independence positions die off; their successors have less political capital; and they, in turn, succumb to the destructive passion for "faction." "Throw the rascals out" is a sometimes successful slogan, not only because there are some "rascals" to be thrown out, but also because the rascals fall out among themselves. Burma with or without rascals is having its fall-out period, but it is apparently handling this crisis far better than most observers had expected. The AFPFL still has the aura of liberation and independence. It will not be easily displaced.

Dr. Trager, professor of international affairs and acting director of the Center for International Affairs and Development at New York University, was formerly Point Four director in Burma and is at present in Southeast Asia. He is the author of "Burma: Land of Golden Pagodas," *Headline Series*, No. 104, March-April 1954, and coauthor and editor of *Burma* (New Haven, Human Relations Area Files, 1956), 3 vols.



Middle East: Tentative Balance Sheet

The week of July 14, 1958 (which, by a dramatic coincidence, started off with France's celebration of Bastille Day just as the troubled Middle East erupted again) is still so close to the emotions of the entire world that it is difficult to view it with a historian's detachment. Yet, it is already evident that in the perspective of history, which students of public affairs have a duty to anticipate, that week marked a turning point for the West which may prove a point of no return, at least in the lifetime of contemporary generations.

Two things are already clear: first, that the great powers believe the United Nations is not adequately equipped to protect their interests as they see them; and, second, that the small nations and the pre-1945 great powers defeated in World War II, particularly Japan and Germany, have strong reservations about the unilateral actions of great powers outside of the UN and NATO.

Grounds for Decisions

The decisions of the United States, following the coup in Iraq, to send Marines into Lebanon and to mass a fleet in the eastern Mediterranean and of Britain to land paratroopers in Jordan were explained on four main grounds. It was argued, first, that outside intervention by the U.S.S.R. and/or the United Arab Republic menaced the internal security of Lebanon and Jordan; second, that the governments of these two countries, in the exercise of their legitimate right of self-defense, had appealed for military assistance to the United States and/or Britain, which responded to these requests; third, that the crucial interests of the West-

ern powers were at stake in the Middle East, notably maintenance of the flow of Mideast oil to Europe, whose industries might otherwise be jeopardized; and, fourth, that the United States and Britain would be ready to withdraw their armed forces as soon as the UN could replace them with forces of its own. However, within 48 hours after the army revolt that brought about the downfall of the monarchy in Iraq, Washington and London agreed there was no prospect of intervening there. This decision was reached in spite of the likelihood then that the new regime would leave the Baghdad pact, was going to be neutralist although not anti-Western and intended to have close relations with the U.S.S.R., the United Arab Republic and Communist China, but had declared the oil fields would be protected.

What Critics Say

Critics of the decisions taken on the Middle East by the Eisenhower Administration and the British government—among them, Walter Lippmann, C. L. Sulzberger, Senators William J. Fulbright and Mike Mansfield (Democrats), and Senator John Sherman Cooper (Republican)—made the following principal points:

1. The two Western powers appeared to act on the assumption that all expressions of Arab nationalism are inspired either by communism or by Nasserism. No allowance was made for the possibility, which Middle Eastern experts regard as an actuality, that the antimonarchist elements in Iraq and Jordan, and Muslim leaders in Lebanon, have reasons of their own for seeking to

change internal conditions. By taking the position that communism is the sole source of unrest throughout the world, the Western powers, critics contend, either misinterpret or distort actual conditions in the Middle East, as well as in other non-Western countries, and, failing to understand the cause of the trouble, are unable and will continue to be unable to discover adequate remedies.

2. The United States, because of its emphasis on defense of the non-Communist world against the Communist powers, the U.S.S.R. and Communist China, has put itself in the position of seeming to defend the *status quo* in areas of the world where the continuance of present conditions or present relations with the West are increasingly regarded as intolerable—from Iraq to Algeria. It has thus dissipated, critics declare, the store of good will and admiration formerly inspired by its traditional anticolonial policy and revived by its policy toward Britain and France during the Suez crisis of 1956.

3. The United States has made a mistake in talking about the "vacuum" in the Middle East, which is obviously inhabited by populations that for years have been struggling to escape first from the domination of the Ottoman Empire and then from British and French rule under League of Nations mandates during the interwar years. The use of this term arouses resentment among Arab nationalists.

4. The United States and Britain have acted in the Middle East on the assumption that the U.S.S.R., although admittedly also a great power—and one which is geographically far closer to the area than the West-

ern nations — must be and can be “kept out.” This assumption Middle Eastern experts consider as entirely unrealistic. Moreover, critics ask, How can the United States and Britain insist on having a free hand in the Middle East, yet at the same time argue that the future of Eastern Europe, which Russia regards as its sphere of influence, is a legitimate subject for discussion at a summit conference?

5. The United States and Britain, critics contend, are unrealistic in declaring that they will withdraw their forces from the Middle East as soon as the UN can replace them with forces of its own. It is obvious that the great powers, each by itself, and of course far more so when they pool their efforts, command man power and firepower resources that no force thus far contemplated by the UN could possibly match.

The drafters of the UN Charter had expected that all members of the UN would place military units at its disposal for purposes of collective defense. This expectation was made abortive by the cold war. Today the best the UN can do is to muster small groups of armed men contributed by nations other than the great powers, as it has done for duty in Sinai. If the UN were to accept from one group of great powers armed forces of the size sent by the United States and Britain to the Middle East

and exclude the forces of other great powers, it would as of that day cease being an international organization and become the instrument of one coalition or another.

6. A dangerous result of the Anglo-American action in Lebanon and Jordan is that it may bring about an irreparable split within the UN, this time not between great powers, as happened in the case of Suez and the revolt in Hungary, but between the small nations, with the U.S.S.R. on their side, and the two Western powers. The danger of such a split became promptly apparent when Sweden expressed its strong reservations about the landing of American Marines in Lebanon and Japan voiced its regrets. The possibility of a new, and for the West painfully surprising, line-up could become even more apparent at a meeting of the General Assembly.

7. But the most disastrous outcome of the Middle East crisis, critics fear, is that the U.S.S.R. could reap a rich harvest of advantages without making any warlike move outside its borders. The image Soviet propaganda has been painting, of the United States as a supporter of Western colonial powers determined to prevent internal changes in non-Western nations and to retain their economic assets, by force if necessary, could become indelibly imprinted on the minds of Arabs, Asians and Af-

ricans, no matter how legitimate the West's intentions may look to its own leaders.

Nor would it make any significant difference that Russia itself has used force to retain its hold on neighboring peoples and to protect what it regards as its strategic and economic interests by ruthless methods that the Western powers have no desire to use. For the non-Western peoples know that Russia is politically backward as compared with the United States and Britain. They do not expect from the Russians the civilized methods presupposed by the concepts of Western democracy. And the greatest damage, perhaps not retrievable in our lifetime, which Anglo-American action may have caused is to have equated the actions of the free world with those of the totalitarian world.

This, a historian of the future may say, was too high a price to pay. But it would be a particularly high price if, as seems probable, the United States and Britain, in spite of a vast display of force, should prove unable to turn back the tide of Arab nationalism and revolution, which is running toward some form of union of Arab states led not only by Nasser but also by other Muslims who represent a revolution, not unlike that of the days of the Bastille, of a rising middle class against feudal dynasties.

VERA MICHELES DEAN

FOREIGN POLICY BULLETIN

345 East 46th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

In this issue:

The New Temper of Burmese Politics—

F. N. Trager 177

American Views on Lebanon—

M. Lerner 180

W. Lippmann 181

Middle East: Tentative Balance Sheet—

V. M. Dean 183

In the next issue:

A Foreign Policy Report—

The Law of Outer Space,

by Andrew G. Haley